

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Washington

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August 9, 1938.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

Re: Use of Sound Slide Films by the
Department of Agriculture.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The undersigned were appointed a committee to report on the possibility of making use of sound slide films by various agencies of the Department of Agriculture.

The sound slide film is an educational medium that combines two teaching arts: one which serves the mind and the emotions of the learner through the ear alone; one which uses graphic and pictorial matter alone. Skillfully used, the blend of eye-effect and ear-effect in the sound slide film can serve to speed up the learning of some types of subject matter. However, it seems to the committee that sound slide films should not be considered in any way a substitute for sound motion pictures, nor for the appearances at public meetings of authorities, leaders, or teachers.

In appointing this committee, you asked information on four phases of possible use of sound slide films by the Department. We have gathered some facts and formulated some opinions and now report as follows:

I. What Department Agencies Might Use Sound Slide Films

It seems that sound slide films should probably not be used in the older type of extension teaching. The sound slide film is much more expensive than the silent slide film. In the opinion of the Extension Service, the advantage of the added sound as an aid in teaching farming and homemaking practices is not great enough to justify going to the extra expense.

For the purposes listed below, it seems that the advantage of the sound slide film is great enough to justify the additional expenditure necessary to fit sound and pictures together, and that the indicated agencies might find use for sound slide films in accomplishing each of the listed purposes:

1. The sound slide film as developed by the technique used in producing the Visomatic production "State of the Nation, 1935," is an educational instrument very effective in simplifying abstract subject matter, and impressing it vividly upon the beholder. Conveying abstract subject matter is the teaching problem faced in the outlook work of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the "why," and, to some extent, the "how" community meetings of the AAA, discussion group meetings, in leader training and field man training, and in some of our work with consumer clubs and women's organizations.

Agencies which would find talking slide films most useful in teaching abstract subject matter are the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, and the Food and Drug Administration. By skillful use of sound slide films these agencies can be sure that the teaching methods used in working with groups scattered throughout the country are effective -- and equally effective with each group. The agencies can't be sure of this if they depend upon many different individuals to put a series of difficult facts and ideas before many different groups.

2. Another problem of conveying information effectively to large numbers of people is that of reporting to the public -- either farm or city or both -- why the Congress has directed the expenditures of public funds on large-scale operations for human or natural conservation, and how the directions of the Congress are being carried through. There is a reporting problem of this sort in connection with operations for erosion control, flood control, and rural rehabilitation. For use in schools, before organized groups of adults, and in the training of local leaders and vocational teachers, the sound slide film is admirably adapted to the needs in this regard of the Soil Conservation Service, the Farm Security Administration, the Office of Land Use Coordination, and the land use division of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

3. A somewhat similar problem of reporting to the public faces the Department units which act as trustees for the public property in the national forests, and in wildlife refuges. For this type of reporting sound slide films could be used by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Biological Survey.

4. There is a peculiar problem of securing the cooperation of great numbers of citizens in carrying through regulatory programs that simply cannot be policed by the limited personnel of enforcement agencies. The Bureau of Biological Survey has such a problem in enforcement of the migratory waterfowl hunting regulations. Its only hope of obtaining the necessary cooperation of millions of gunners is by an educative process. The committee can think of nothing that would be more effective in this process of education than correctly conceived and executed sound slide films.

5. Industrial concerns and organizations are using sound slide films extensively and successfully in employee and agent training. An analogous use can be and is being made by the Bureau of Public Roads in teaching principles of highway design and construction and maintenance determined by its research and experience.

II. Sound Slide Film Cost

The following data on costs have been compiled by the historical and photographic section of the Farm Security Administration.

A. Production

1. Masters - Governmental

a. Recording	\$40.00
b. Voices (3)	75.00
c. Master film	25.00
d. Script)	
e. Photography) to be done by government personnel	
f. Art work)	
Total....	\$140.00

2. Masters - Non-governmental

a. Recording	\$250.00
Direction	
Studio	
Auditions	
Rehearsals	
b. Voices (3)	90.00
c. Script	250.00
d. Master film	75.00
Total.....	\$665.00

NOTE: Plus photography at \$15.00 per frame, art work at \$3.00 per hour, and plus 20% profit.

3. Copies - either Governmental or Non-governmental

- a. Pressings of master record, \$1.50 each
- b. Duplicates of master film, \$1.25 each

In other words, the Governmental cost of masters plus 100 copies -- making no charge for script, photography, and art work -- would be \$140, plus \$150 for pressing plus \$125 for duplicate films, a total of \$415. The non-Governmental cost of masters plus 100 copies would be \$665, plus \$900 for photography (assuming 60 frames) plus at least \$150 for art work, a total plus 20% profit, on the \$1,715 base cost -- in all, \$2,060.

B. Distribution

1. Equipment

- a. AC/DC projector, 100 watts, \$78.50 (in lots of 1 - 11)

NOTE: Projectors can be rented from local Western Union offices at \$3.00 for 2 hour period without operator; \$5.00 with operator.

2. Transportation

3. Maintenance

\$2.75 every ten showings, i. e., replacement of film and recording.

III. Department Personnel Available to Plan and Make Sound Slide Films

Planning and production of sound slide films would require the services of departmental personnel trained in effective still picture, chart, and map work and in effective radio broadcasting work, particularly the "script" type of radio production.

The committee suggests -- though its list should not be considered as exclusive -- that the following persons probably would be able to contribute most to a unit for planning and producing sound slide films:

From the still picture field -- Stryker and Locke of the Farm Security Administration; Sill of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration; Anthony of Soil Conservation Service; Schlup of Extension Service; Bowie of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics; and Thomas of the Bureau of Public Roads.

From the radio field -- Kadderly and Miss Hemphill of the Office of Information; Baker of the Extension Service; DuMars of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration; Randall and Beers of the Forest Service.

IV. Means of Distribution

This is the bottleneck. Nation-wide distribution of sound slide films requires the presence of projectors throughout the country. At present projectors are pretty widely distributed. They are in the hands of all dealers for the Ford Motor Company, the Chevrolet division of General Motors, and the International Harvester Company. All told these dealers in probably 6,000 different towns are equipped with machines to reproduce sound slide films. The problem of exhibiting sound slide films at first would center on ways and means of getting the loan or the rental of machines from these business firms. This could be

done fairly easily, it seems. The Extension Service leaned heavily upon borrowing projectors from automobile agents in the early days of silent slide films.

In a few score of the larger cities the Western Union has machines for rent.

Scattered here and there are machines owned by local organizations. However, the machines will not be bought by many organizations until there are some worthwhile things -- other than the NAM or GM, Ford, or IHC films -- to be shown on them.

Data on cost of machines were given under Section II of the discussion of sound slide film cost.

Probably it will be necessary for the Department to set up a unit to handle distribution if we go into production on any extensive scale. The problem will be similar to that of handling distribution of motion pictures.

As projectors become more generally available, probably the university extension departments of the Nation, the agricultural extension services, at least in the larger States, and several groups such as the YMCA, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, will maintain units for sound slide film distribution. As a matter of fact, the YMCA now has a small unit for this purpose. However, we will not be able for some time, if ever, to look to these distributing agencies to buy films and recordings as they now buy films alone. We will have to operate on a loan or rental basis as we do with motion pictures.

Assuming that the Department will staff itself to handle a stock of films and recordings, and that the distribution of projectors will become widespread so that in most towns of greater than hamlet size there will be reproducing equipment, your committee foresees the following as the main channels of distribution:

A. Schools

1. Smith-Hughes agricultural high schools
2. Teacher training summer courses
NOTE: 88 of these schools give visual education courses and are valuable seed-
ing grounds for the distribution of
visual material.
3. Visual education courses in colleges
4. Visual education extension departments
in colleges.

- B. Discussion groups
 - 1. Extension service community groups
 - 2. AAA community forums
 - 3. Educational forums
 - 4. Service groups, luncheons
 - 5. YMCA's
 - 6. Women's clubs
 - 7. Church organizations
- C. Extension Service
 - 1. County agents
 - 2. 4-H clubs

V. Recommended Action

The committee recommends that in the current year the agencies that can make most advantageous use of sound slide films produce a small number so as to get a trial of their worth. We suggest that the AAA and the BAE consider making one, two, or three productions teaching facts and concepts basic to the present economic programs that the Congress has directed the Secretary to carry on. We suggest also that the Office of Land Use Coordination and the action agencies consider issuing one or two productions which will be useful in placing basic data and concepts before local planning groups. We suggest that the Soil Conservation Service, the Farm Security Administration, and the Forest Service consider making at least one each of the reporting type.

If these are made, they should be shown on a schedule and under arrangements which will permit gathering data on their effectiveness.

To bring to bear all the knowledge of technique that exists in the Department on the problems of turning out the individual productions, we suggest that an advisory committee comprised of L. A. Schlup of the Extension Service, Roy Stryker of the Farm Security Administration, and W. L. Kadderly of the Office of Information be created and directed to work with the agencies producing sound slide films.

Sincerely yours,

Morse Salisbury Roy E. Stryker
Morse Salisbury Roy E. Stryker

Alfred D. Stedman John R. Fleming
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Roy F. Hendrickson Reuben Brigham
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